and live up to it unconsciously & automatically. The Upanisad asks us in cases of doubt & difficulty to conduct ourselves in the manner in which the knowers of Brahman devoted to duty would do. (Tait. I. 11). These great men go on doing their daily work, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light & the flower perfume, without their being aware of it. Every man can realise such a condition. According to Christian thinkers, one such complete manifestation of God in man is in the personality of Jesus. The Upanisads declare that all men have in them the possibility of rising to their full divine stature and can realise it if they strive for it.

XVI.

The Religious Consciousness.

Religion is essentially a matter of life and experience. The Upanisads prescribe three stages in the growth of the religious consciousness - viz. 1) Sravana, which literally means the listening. 2) Manana or reflection. and 3) Nididhyāsana or contemplative meditation. Udayana in his Kusumāñjali 1.3. quotes a verse which mentions 1) āgama or scripture. 2) Anumāna or inference & 3) dhyāna or meditation.

The first stage points to the place of tradition in religious life. For the initiation

of faith in the living God, some kind of traditional revelation is necessary. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Religion according to the Upanisads, is not to be confused with tradition.

The need for rational thought is brought out in the second stage. The mere assumption of the first stage becomes now a logical conclusion. The highest experience of reality, this consciousness of the infinite requires the development of a mode of apprehension distinct from that of mere reason.

Nididhyāsana, or contemplative meditation helps us to transform the logical idea into a spiritual perception or darśana, which is another name for the effective realisation of truth already admitted. Meditation is not advised as a means to trance and catalepsy, which are most emphatically denounced, but only as a help for the mind to rest on the object. The worship of God, the practice of goodness and the pursuit of truth are aids to the building up of the life of truth in the soul. There is an intense realisation, which pulses through the whole being, a becoming one with God, as it were. The worshipper grows akin to that which he worships. The object becomes not only the content of but the consciousness itself of the contemplator. The Upanisads speak of us of the intuition of minor deities as well as the ecstatic intuition of Brahman. So long as the objects intuited have

limitations or bāces of individuality, the ultimate goal is not reached. we must in truth Brahman to become Brahman.

The religion of the Upanisads insists on a transformation of the whole nature of man. It is not a mere formal cult or an ethical discipline or a dogmatic creed. The Upanisads are aware of the contradictions which ordinary religious consciousness is apt to exhibit, and so they lay down ~~an explicit~~ a doctrine which becomes explicit only when the intuitive vision of the Upanisads is converted into a scientific system of thought. The Upanisads recognise higher & lower forms of religion.

The highest religion of the Upanisads is not encumbered by such traditional dogmas and miracles as still hang upon the skirts of other religions. Its central principle that there is one supreme reality that manifests itself in the universe is not asserted as a dogma. It is the ultimate truth at which it is possible for human understanding to arrive. The progress of science and philosophy does not conflict with it but only confirms it. The Upanisad religion is the feeling of reverence and love for the great spirit. Such meditation is spiritualised bhakti. The oneness and wholeness of the world is the supreme fact of the Upanisad religion.

Man as finite self, cannot grasp the absolute reality. So the Absolute becomes a personal God. God is the friend and helper, the father and creator, the governor of the Universe. He is said to be the Supreme person (Puruṣottama) but He does not rule the world from without. He is the inner guide or the antaryāmi. All things are of Him, in Him, and unto Him. But, to quote Jacobi, an understood God is no God at all. To imagine God is what we think is nothing less than blasphemy. Though the God of religion is a limited expression of the absolute, it is not a mere imaginative presentation. God is the absolute personified. The Upanisads do not care to identify Him with the ideal tendency of things oppoing and struggling through the non-ideal; in that case He would be reduced to the level of the finite. According to the Upanisads the Absolute and God are one. The relation between the two, the absolute Brahman and the personal Īśvara, may be like that of the brute Lord to the idol. Yet the two are one. The absolute is both personal and impersonal. Meditation on the supreme becomes the passionate

devotion of the Lord of the Universe. 34
Deva-prasāda or grace of god is the
condition of the deliverance of man
from bondage. "This Atman cannot be
obtained through study or intelligence
or much learning — whom he wishes to
attain by him it can be attained.
To him the Ātman reveals its true
nature. (Mundaka - III. 2.3; Katha V 23.).
The oneness of God and man is realised
only after a good deal of discipline &
Exercise. The higher we go in religious
Experience the more we perceive the identity
between the Object of worship and the
worshipper, till at last the two become one.
Then the absolute is felt as a boundless
Spirit pervading the whole universe &
flooding the soul of man. The end of
Religion is the transcendence of religion.

The Upanisad thinkers, Conscious of
the weakness of human understanding
which has to limit the God present
in all things, at all times, and in all
places to some special place, time & thing,
recognise that if lower forms of worship
are dismissed, there is the risk of
banishing God altogether out of life.
It is said we ~~come~~ become whatever
form we worship. "Let him worship

the Brahman as support, and he becomes supported. Let him worship Brahman as greatness and he becomes great. Let him worship Brahman as mind. he becomes endowed with mind. And Let him worship Brahman as Brahman and he will become possessed of Brahman. (Taith. III 10; See also Chan: I. 3.12; Bth I. 2. 13).

The Upanisads consider the highest form of worship to be spiritual meditation on the absolute; next in rank is the passionate devotion to the one immanent Lord; lowest of all is the worship of the Vedic devas and other deities.

It is frequently urged that the Upanisads do not admit of any religious worship. Dr Urquhart writes: "However clearly the attitude of pure worship may seem to be indicated, there is a constant refrain sometimes even in the same verse to the effect that the self who is to be worshipped is the self of the worshipper & that consequently there is no such distinction between the two (God and man) as is demanded by the personality fully theistic relation". (The Upanisads and Life. p. 60). The unity of spirit is the first principle of the Upanisad doctrine. Divine immanence is its central fact. If that is inconsistent with religious worship, it only means

that theism has no place in it for true religion, since a true theism must accept divine immanence. All true religion declares that finite things are not self-sustained, are not self-evolved, but that God is over all, through all, in all, the ground of existence, the source of life and the goal of desire. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art here. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me." (Psalm cxxxix). "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord; Do not I fill Heaven and earth?" "In God we live and move and have our being." (St. Paul). and "He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him" (St. John). All true religion recognises the immanence of God and is highly mystic.